



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 4, 2003

For Information Contact Public Affairs
HARRIET BERNICK
Telephone: (602) 514-7736
Pager: (602) 356-0004

ACCOUNTANT WHO EMBEZZLED OVER \$450,000 FROM DESERT BOTANICAL GARDENS IS SENTENCED TO 2 YEARS IN PRISON

PHOENIX, ARIZONA –The United States Attorneys Office for the District of Arizona, announced that on November 3, 2003, CRAIG SHELDON SAVAGE, (D.O.B. 9-17-65), of Baltimore, Maryland, was sentenced to 2 years in prison by United States District Judge Susan R. Bolton, in Phoenix, Arizona.

SAVAGE had entered a plea of guilty on October 7, 2002 to an information charging one count of Theft from and Organization Receiving Federal Funds, a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 666(a). Sentencing was deferred for several months while the defendant's competency was being evaluated.

According to court records and the proceedings at sentencing, Savage embezzled over \$450,000 from the Arizona Desert Botanical Garden (the "Garden") during 1999, 2000, and 2001, while employed as a fund accountant and later Director of Finance for the Garden. Savage forged signatures on approximately \$150,000 in Garden checks and deposited them to the bank account of the Sonoran Group, an account he controlled. Once he became signer on the Garden bank account, Savage signed additional checks totaling

(MORE)

nearly \$300,000 payable to the Sonoran Group. Savage altered copies of the bank account statements and took other steps to conceal the embezzlement. Savage acknowledged he used the money transferred to the Sonoran Group to play the stock market, hoping to reap substantial profits and return the money unnoticed to the Garden. Once the fraud was uncovered, Savage was fired. He then relocated to Baltimore.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The prosecution was handled by Daniel R. Drake, Assistant United States Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-02-1021-PHX-SRB
RELEASE NUMBER: 2003-188

#